



The above still shows our suggested composition for an interview shot. It could be slightly tighter or slightly looser, but this gives you the ballpark of what we're looking for. Notice that the subject is not dead center, but slightly to the right. This gives her "looking room". In other words, there is more open space in the direction she is looking in (to the left.) Of course, you can always frame her in the opposite configuration (framed in the left portion of the screen, looking right). For stories with more than one interview, make sure to alternate your compositions (have some interviews framed left looking right, and some interviews framed right looking left), so that all of the interview subjects don't end up on the same side (it will feel lopsided). To achieve the preferred "eye-line" of the interview subject, she should be making eye contact with the reporter/interviewer at all times. (Please tell the interview subjects NOT to look into the lens.) The reporter should be positioned with her head as close to lens as possible, on the side opposite to the interview subject. (For example, in the above shot, the interview subject is framed right, and the reporter is sitting to the left of the lens.)

Make sure to use a tripod. Level your camera with the bubble balance on your tripod. To make sure your shot is truly level, align the sides of your frame with perpendicular lines in the environment (like the line where walls meet), or align the top and bottom of your frame with horizon lines (such as the line where the wall and the ceiling meet, or where the sky meets the ocean). Don't rely on the Autofocus setting on your camera. Set your focus to Manual, zoom all the way in to the interview subject's face, focus, then zoom back out to your interview composition.



The above still represents a reporter “cutaway”. If your story has an on-camera reporter (one who reads parts of the script in on-camera “uppers”), then you might want to shoot a reporter cutaway immediately after the interview is completed. This is a shot of the reporter listening to the interview subject. This cutaway will enable you to cover the jump-cut edit which will occur when you chop out pieces of the interview or when you butt one soundbite up against another. Notice that the reporter’s head is roughly the same size as that of the interview subject in the previous shot. Also, the reporter occupies the opposite side of the screen from the interview subject in the previous shot and is looking in the opposite direction (to the right). You can also have the reporter repeat some of the questions she had asked the interview subject. This will enable the editor to cut from the reporter asking a question to the interview subject answering the question.



The reporter cutaway can also be in the form of an “over-the-shoulder” shot. (See above.) This is a shot in which the cameraperson zooms out wide enough to include the back of the interview subject’s head and shoulder. Because we don’t see the interview subject’s mouth in this shot, the editor can pair any part of the interview audio with this shot. This shot also helps to establish the spatial relationship between the reporter and the interview subject.



The above shot is an example of how NOT to frame an interview shot. This angle is too much of a profile. We should be able to see both eyes of the interview subject. This sort

of composition is distracting because it places too much emphasis on what's going on off-camera (in this case, to the right of the camera). Viewers will be asking "what is she looking at?" instead listening to what's being said.



The above still is another example of how NOT to frame an interview shot. Having the interview subject and reporter together in the same shot, loosely framed and in profile, is awkward and distracting. For the most part, the viewer needs to focus on the interview subject. Having the reporter and interview subject in the same shot makes it difficult to know whom to focus on.